## **DPC Newsletter**

Volume 3, Issue 4 May 2005

# Contra Costa County Considering Urban Limit Line Changes

Contra Costa County's urban limit line, last revised by the County in 2000, is at the heart of a discussion on how to control urban sprawl in the County. While cities including Brentwood, Pittsburg, Discovery Bay, Antioch, and Concord want to expand the urban limit line to include an additional 6,300 developable acres in the County, environmentalists say cities should look to undeveloped lands within their current limits and redevelop these areas before looking at areas outside of the line.

The urban limit line debate has been brewing since 1990, when the issue was first approved by the voters. Cities sued the County when it readjusted the urban limit line in 2000, so the County has hired a mediator to direct discussions on seven different proposals under consideration. The Board of Supervisors has gone on record in support of Plan C, sponsored by a group of environmentalists, home builders, and business leaders that leaves the current urban limit line in place but allows for adjustments every ten years if cities can make the case that there is not enough land for homes for the following twenty years.

If the issue is not resolved and voters cannot decide on an urban limit line by 2009, local governments stand to lose millions of dollars in transportation funds they would collect under Measure J, a half-cent transportation tax approved by voters in November 2004. Officials are hoping to get the issue placed on the ballot in November 2006, so that they may bring it back to voters in 2008 if it fails to pass in 2006. According to Measure J, if 75% of the cities, four of the five County Supervisors, and 75% of voters adopt a new urban limit line in 2006, that line would also apply to the 25% of cities refusing to participate; these cities would have to pass their own urban limit lines in order to override the countywide boundary. If an urban limit line measure is to be placed on the November 2006 ballot, an environmental review process must be initiated soon, so that the process can be completed before the election.

At its meeting in March 2005, the Board of Supervisors asked its staff to research the feasibility of putting the revised (2000) urban limit line on the ballot in November 2005 if the State holds a special election, in order to avoid having to complete an environmental impact report. However, after a countywide summit held on March 31 on the issue, the Board of Supervisors appears to be more amenable to continued discussions with the East County cities who have advocated expansions to the urban limit line. Another summit was held in April to discuss what areas should be studied in an environmental impact report.

## **Update on Legislation of Interest to the Commission**

At its March meeting, the Commission received information on several pieces of legislation that have been introduced during this first year of the 2005-2006 Legislative session. All bills under consideration must be passed by September 9, 2005, in order for the Governor to consider taking action on them. The Governor must sign or veto any bills by October 9, 2005.

The following are bills that Commission staff is currently tracking:

#### AB 797: Wolk: DELTA PROTECTION COMMISSION

New language lays out proposed changes in membership to the Commission. The bill proposes eliminating the six State agency representatives from the Commission, and adding eight members as follows: the public member of the California Bay-Delta Authority representing the Delta; the Secretary of CDFA; and six members appointed by the Resources Agency Secretary representing the public and Resources Agency departments. These six members would consist of two members appointed from the general public who are delta residents or landowners, or representatives of NGOs with interest in the Delta, and four appointed from departments within the Resource Agency. The six members would equally represent: conservation of wildlife and habitat resources of the Delta; protection and enhancement of environmental concerns including water quality, human health, and ecosystems; boating and marina operations; outdoor recreation opportunities including hunting and fishing; historical and cultural preservation; and unincorporated Delta communities. The bill also proposes that the Commission's two-year Chair and Vice Chair terms be rotated among the Commissioners.

### **AB 1200: Laird: SACTO-SAN JOAQUIN DELTA**

This bill would require DWR and DFG to submit written findings to the Legislature and Governor, no later than January 1, 2006, on the potential impacts subsidence, earthquakes, floods, and climate change may have on water supplies derived from the Delta, and on water delivery infrastructure within the Delta.

#### AB 1296: Hancock: S.F. BAY AREA WATER TRAIL

This bill would require the State Coastal Conservancy to lead a collaborative partnership to establish a plan for the San Francisco Bay Water Trail, linking access to the San Francisco and San Pablo Bays and the Delta, and providing for diverse water-accessible overnight accommodations.

### **AB 1665: Laird: FLOODING**

An earlier version of this bill proposed the creation of a Central Valley Flood Control Assessment District, with the authority to impose assessments and set up a subventions program to maintain levees in the area drained by the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers (including the Delta). The bill was amended, and now reads simply that the State Reclamation Board would be re-named the Central Valley Flood Control Board and would require that Board to take steps to ensure improved safety of levees in the Central Valley.

#### SB 113: Machado (and Torlakson): CALIFORNIA BAY-DELTA AUTHORITY ACT

This bill as amended defines the conditions under which activities carried out under the various

components of the CALFED program yield only public benefits (allowed to be funded with State funds), only private benefits (not allowed to be funded with State funds), or both (may be funded with a mixture of State and non-State funds).

#### SB 200: Machado: DELTA CONSERVANCY PROGRAM

This bill would establish the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy Program, to be administered by the State Coastal Conservancy, to undertake projects in the Delta, and create a Delta Conservancy Program Account in the State Coastal Conservancy Fund for administration and implementation of the program. As amended, the bill also proposes creation of a Delta Conservancy Program Account in the Coastal Trust Fund, to fund activities in the Delta carried out under the proposed Delta Conservancy Program. Finally, the bill proposes that the six legislators appointed to participate on the Coastal Conservancy be balanced in representation among coastal California, the San Francisco Bay Area, and the Delta.

#### SB 866: Kehoe: WATER USE MEASUREMENT INFO

This bill would require DWR, no later than two years after completing each update of the California Water Plan, to submit a written report to the Legislature regarding water use measurement information. It would also require DWR to develop and implement the use of a coordinated water use reporting database, to be made available over the Internet. The bill as currently drafted calls out agricultural water suppliers to report aggregated farm-gate delivery to DWR, and persons diverting surface water for agricultural use to measure and report those diversions to DWR, using the standard forms.

## **Isleton Crawdad Festival Survives Controversy**

Recent news reports of a tug-of-war between Isleton's Chamber of Commerce and the City of Isleton over the fate of the annual Crawdad Festival speculated that the event may be eliminated altogether.

The Isleton Chamber of Commerce, which has sponsored the event since its inception in 1986, decided to move the festival from downtown Isleton to land on the outskirts of the city due to pressure from the Department of Transportation over traffic problems, and for insurance reasons (the Chamber's liability insurance carrier canceled its coverage in 2004). This decision upset many downtown merchants, who claim that the annual event is their biggest money -making event of the year, and believe the relocation of the festival would hurt their businesses.

In response to the Chamber's proposal, the City of Isleton began planning its own, more family friendly festival for the same weekend, to be located downtown. The City appropriated \$70,000 for a public relations firm to organize the City's version of the Crawdad Festival. Rather than try to compete with the City's event, the Chamber of Commerce opted to cancel its event. It is unknown at this time whether the Chamber will sue the City over the use of the "Crawdad Festival" name, which the Chamber claims it owns exclusive rights to.

Approximately 25,000 people attended last year's three-day event over Father's Day weekend. According to businesses downtown, the revenues generated from those three days of business equate

to months of sales. However, this has also historically been the time period over which problems in Isleton are reported, mostly due to widespread drinking and disorderly behavior.

The event sponsored by the City will take place over Father's Day weekend, June 17-19, 2005. There will be a \$5 admission fee, and it is hoped that a more family-friendly atmosphere will tone down some of the rowdy behavior reported during past festivals. In addition to crawdads, the event will offer other Cajun delicacies such as gumbo, jambalaya, and alligator on a stick, as well as Cajun music and vendors.

# Should SMUD Provide Electric Service to Part of Yolo County?

The issue of potential SMUD annexation in parts of Yolo County is the result of a unanimous vote of local officials in Woodland, West Sacramento, Davis, and the Board of Supervisors. These officials expressed hope for lower electric rates, more reliable service and a direct say in their energy future as a result of SMUD service.

SMUD staff has reviewed a consultant's annexation feasibility study, conducted its own analysis and recommended that the Board take the next step toward annexing a service area directly adjacent to SMUD's existing service area in Sacramento County.

SMUD's detailed staff analysis concluded that annexation would be economically feasible, offering \$180 million in savings over 20 years to both new and existing SMUD customers. Yolo customers would see lower electric rates, even though costs associated with annexation would be their responsibility to repay through bill surcharges.

The Board will decide May 19 whether to proceed with annexation. If the directors decide to move forward, the next step would be to submit an application for annexation to the Sacramento County Local Agency Formation Commission.

The Board is committed to hearing from existing customers throughout this process. Members of the SMUD Board have held three customer workshops, participated in numerous community forums and are encouraging customers to stay informed on development in this process, and to contact their Board Director with questions and comments. Visit the SMUD website, www.smud.org, for contact information as well as more information or to sign up for email updates.

## Workshop on Delta Levees to be Held at UOP

To commemorate the one-year anniversary of last year's levee break on Jones Tract, the California Bay-Delta Authority, Delta Protection Commission, Department of Water Resources, State Reclamation Board, Water Education Foundation, and other Delta interests are co-sponsoring an event titled "Delta Levees Workshop: Avoiding the Next Big Break". The workshop will take place at the University of the Pacific's Pacific Theater on Monday, June 6,

2005.

In addition to several keynote speakers presenting information on the past, present, and future of the Delta levees system, the event will include an optional bus trip to Jones Tract to visit the repair site.

Pre-registration is required to attend this workshop. The cost is \$95 per person for the one-day workshop; this cost includes lunch and the optional bus trip to Jones Tract. You may register online at www.watereducation.org/briefings.asp.

More information on this workshop is available by calling the Water Education Foundation at (916) 444-6240. You may also call Delta Protection Commission staff at (916) 776-2290 if you would like to receive a brochure containing registration information.

Special thanks to the following supporters of the workshop: Downey Brand LLP; MBK Engineers; KSN Engineers; and the North, Central, and South Delta Water Agencies.